




Speech By
Joseph Kelly

MEMBER FOR GREENSLOPES

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ADJOURNMENT

Franco, Mr J

 **Mr KELLY** (Greenslopes—ALP) (8.55 pm): I would like to pay tribute to a friend, a true comrade and great community member who sadly passed away last week, Mr Jose Franco. Jose died peacefully surrounded by his family. His last 18 months or so were a struggle due to a debilitating stroke, but they were made much easier by his devoted son Alex. Jose will be fondly remembered and deeply missed by his children Omar, Alex and the apple of his eye, Liliana, and his grandchildren.

As a young man, Jose became politically active and aware in his native Argentina. This was a time when activism carried significant risks. Jose brought his family to Australia for peace, opportunity and democracy and, like all migrants, he has greatly enriched our nation.

For me, Jose represented all that is good about politics. He never desired high office but he did want a world that was better and fairer not selfishly for himself but for his family, his community and our society. He understood that achieving this would take a lifelong commitment of hard work and dedication. He worked on campaigns for Judy Spence, Kevin Rudd, Terri Butler, Cameron Dick, Matt Campbell and Adam Obeid and I am proud to say that my campaign was his last active campaign. No doubt there is a much longer list that I am not aware of. He understood that it takes small actions by many people to achieve big outcomes. He understood why standing on a street corner mattered. He understood why delivering flyers could help to educate the community about social issues and policy.

Jose was a permanent fixture during election times on the corner of Marshall Road and Logan Road. I cannot drive past there without thinking about him. I also cannot drive past Rockingham Street in Mount Gravatt where he lived in public housing. He was well known and loved by all in his large complex. I visited him on many occasions at this address, usually because he had asked me to come and help one of the residents with an issue. He always took the time to help those people around him.

I cannot stress how much he loved to work. He was a boilermaker by trade and worked until he was nearly 70. That is a tough job. Even at the age of 70 he would bring job ads to me and get me to help him apply for jobs. Sadly, he never did get that last job he was chasing. I bumped into Jose one night in fading light as I was stopping off at a shopping centre after work. He was still standing next to an election sign. I invited him back to our place. I went upstairs to break the news to my wife that we had an unexpected guest. By the time we came downstairs, Jose had a chicken under each arm and had my daughters rolling around the backyard in stitches as he regaled them with stories of his childhood in Argentina chasing chickens. A few weeks later Jose dropped over before Christmas and gave my daughters a present and this happened every year after that.

I think the way my kids reacted to Jose was typical of how everyone responded to him. He was happy; he was positive; he had a smile that stretched from here to Buenos Aires. Of course, being porteños, he was a great dancer. He will be greatly missed by all the members of the Labor Party in Greenslopes, by the people in his community and especially by his family. Entonces Comrade, Adios nuestro buen Amigo, Nunca te Olvaremos.